

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council
Smyrna State Service Center
200 South DuPont Blvd.
Suite 101
Smyrna, DE 19977
Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2019
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Darryl Garner, Chair; Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair; Kevin McAllister, Member; Blake Roberts, Member (CAP); William McCafferty, Member; Sonya Lawrence, Member

Teleconference: Lloyd Schmitz, Public; Carol King-Ries, Public

Division for the Visually Impaired: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Sandi Miller, Deputy Director; Deb Bradl, Sr. Social Services Administrator; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist

Call to Order: Darryl Garner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes: March 11, 2019 and April 8, 2019 meeting minutes were approved.

Old Business:

Action Item: Council has requested a graph showing Vocational Rehabilitation consumers and the length of time the consumers have been in Vocational Rehabilitation. Also requested is the number of persons over the age of 40 on the Vocational Rehabilitation roster.

Action Item: DVI will talk to Resource Management Team to pull reports needed to create the graph requested by the Council. Time frame for this item will be provided by Sandi Miller, DVI after speaking with IT Department.

Deb Bradl provided the following information:

- Fiscal Year 2017 (10-1-16 – 9-30-17) 348 referrals/average days open 572
- Fiscal Year 2018 (10-1-17 – 9-30-18) 334 referrals/average days open 1055
- Fiscal Year 2019 (10-1-18 – 9-30-19) 275 open referrals/average days open 1122

Sonya Lawrence asked how DVI's numbers compare to general VR for the federal fiscal years provided by Deb Bradl and if that information can be obtained.

Action Item: Darryl Garner will reach out to Andrea Guest at DVR to request a representative from DVR to come to a VRAC meeting.

Action Item: Council wishes to receive information relative to funds spent on PReETS services. Sandi Miller will investigate this request and reply to Kevin McAllister.

The Retreat was discussed. Funding for the Retreat is not available as it has been in the past for items such as overnight stays and food for the event. A draft agenda was shared previously for the Retreat. Elisha Jenkins explained that the draft agenda was not approved and needs to be amended and re-sent for prior approval. By-laws state that the Council must hold two retreats per year.

Kevin McAllister volunteered to coordinate the Retreat with DVI and to work to amend the draft agenda.

New Business:

A Sunset Committee hearing was held Thursday May 9, 2019. There were approximately 31 recommendations made to DVI.

A task force will be created to review the recommendations made by the Sunset Committee.

William McCafferty stated that DVI should be using more modern technology and O&M instructors should train people after dark.

Sonya Lawrence suggested that everyone come to an agreement as to what it takes to advance the blind and visually impaired community. The agency and the community should find those things they agree upon and move those forward through legislation.

Kevin McAllister suggests that the Chair coordinate with other councils to develop items they can agree upon to move forward with.

DVI Reports:

Director's Report: Business Enterprise Program is involved with the Healthy Vending Initiative with the reports of how many snacks are being purchased from the machines and working on the Governor's plan. Data from March shows a 5% increase in sales from last year to this year. The BEP Program, along with the Division of Public Health, have been awarded the Lt. Governor's Challenge. A white paper is being developed documenting how this process evolved to be shared with other states.

Independent Living Skills: The Independent Living team hosted the Spring Break Program. Six students who participated in activities with independent living as well as pre-employment transition services and access to technology.

The Education and Orientation and Mobility teams hosted seven students at West Chester University. The students helped with a campus tour going to the cafeteria and other popular spots on campus.

Since the last VRAC meeting DVI participated in Teach in Delaware Equipment Fair at the University of Delaware trying to recruit teachers.

On Wednesday May 15th, the Healthy Vision Night will be held at the Delaware Children's Museum. A host of vendors will be on site performing vision screenings, audiology screenings, and other interactive exhibits that will be available.

District Administrator's Report: As of May 9, 2019, the current caseload for the VR Program was 244. Of those 244, 12 people are employed, 4 for more than 90 days and 8 are less than 90 days. 45 individuals are ready to work. The median income is \$18.43 per hour. There are 74 transition aged students ages 14 – 21, we have 61 individuals who are in some level of education or training.

Vocational Rehabilitation was involved in Spring Break activities that were held from April 22 through April 26. It was a collaboration between the various programs within DVI. This year we had services that we contracted with a provider, CIS (Community Integration Services) to engage in activities with the students. On Monday of that week they did an orientation for all students on the pre-employment transition activities for the week.

The Independent Living Skills team and Vocational Rehabilitation teams worked on clothing management and dress for success and CIS worked on workplace readiness skills. On Tuesday the students went to the mall as CIS was working on work based learning, job shadowing and workplace tours at Barnes and Noble, Microsoft and Tesla. On Wednesday, the Independent Living program worked on money management, dining skills and communication with the students. The tech center came in and worked with the students on how to use Echo's and other applications. On Thursday the students went back to the mall, CIS was involved with this as well continuing the work on work-based learning experiences and doing more tours with Barnes and Noble, Microsoft, AT&T and Tesla. On Friday, CIS did a recap of the week. They did mock interviews and shared their observations of their experiences at the mall. Independent Living Skills did a skills recap as did Assistive Technology. They held a small celebration to close out for the week.

On Wednesday May 15th there is a networking event for businesses sponsored by the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce and DVI. It is a two-hour event to provide an opportunity for businesses to network and showcase business services provided by the Division for the Visually Impaired.

Council requested more detail in the DVI reports to show a greater level of detail around the statistics typically reported.

Announcements: Darryl Garner, the Chair announced that he will be stepping down as the Chair due to medical issues.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I

Division for the Visually Impaired

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